REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 and 10-32 are pending in the present application. Claims 11-20 and 22-30 are currently withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 10, and 21 are amended and Claims 31 and 32 are added by the present amendment. Claim amendments and new claims find support in the application as originally filed, at least at Figures 6A and 6B, and in the specification at page 12, lines 14-18. Thus, no new matter is added.

This amendment is submitted in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, which after final rejection permits entering of amendments, canceling claims, complying with any requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office Action, or presenting rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal. It is therefore respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1-10 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Kayahara et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,269,228, hereinafter "Kayahara"). Applicants respectfully traverse that rejection.

Applicants' Claim 1 is directed to a belt driving device that includes, in part, an absorbing member arranged on a rotational axis of a driving roller and configured to absorb shock to the driving roller. Independent Claim 21 includes similar features directed to an image forming apparatus.

In a non-limiting embodiment, Applicants' Figures 6A and 6B show a driving roller 34, a flywheel 506 (e.g., an absorbing member), and a viscous damper 504 (e.g., an absorbing member), arranged on a driving shaft 507 (e.g., a rotational axis of said driving roller).

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Thus, a driving force of the driving roller 34 may advantageously be prevented from fluctuating, because an absorbing member (e.g., a flywheel or a viscous damper) may absorb shock applied to the driving roller.

Kayahara describes a printer unit 2 that includes an intermediate transfer unit 20 with an intermediate transfer belt 21 that is driven by a driving roller 24 and that also includes rollers 22, 23, and 25.[1] In addition, Kayahara indicates that a transfer unit 30 has a secondary transfer bias controller 34 opposing the driving roller 24 of the intermediate transfer unit 20.[2] Kayahara indicates that the transfer unit 30 includes a transfer contact/separation mechanism 33, which "enables the secondary transfer bias controller 34 to come into contact with and separate away from the intermediate transfer belt 21."[3] As shown in Kayahara Figure 2, the transfer contact/separation mechanism 33 is not located on a rotational axis of the secondary transfer bias controller 34, the driving roller 24, or any other roller in Kayahara. Thus, the transfer contact/separation mechanism 33 of Kayahara is not "arranged on a rotational axis of said driving roller," as recited in independent Claims 1 and 21.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that Kayahara fails to teach or suggest that the transfer contact/separation mechanism 33 performs any shock absorbing, and Applicants respectfully traverse the assertion in the Office Action that the transfer contact/separation mechanism 23 of Kayahara is "apparently an absorbing member that absorbed the movement of the transfer roller when the drive roller contacts the outside body."[4] On the other hand, Kayahara merely indicates that the transfer contact/separation mechanism 33 enables the secondary transfer bias controller 34 to come into contact with and separate away from the intermediate transfer belt 21.[5] In addition, Applicants respectfully traverse the assertion in

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[1] Kayahara at Figure 2.
[2] Kayahara at column 30, lines 27-29.
[3] Kayahara at column 30, lines 30-34.
[4] Office Action at page 2, prenumbered paragraph 2.
[5] Kayahara at column 30, lines 30-34.

the Office Action at page 3, numbered paragraph 3, that "in fact and [sic] biasing element that gradually biases an element is configured to absorb shock or vibration to an extent." On the other hand, Applicants respectfully point out that Kayahara is completely silent regarding any indication that the transfer contact/separation mechanism 33 "gradually biases an element," as suggested by the Office Action. On the other hand, Figure 2 of Kayahara merely shows a generally circular cross section having symmetrical cut away portions on the transfer contact/separation mechanism 33, and Kayahara does not show or suggest that the transfer contact/separation mechanism 33 is configured to "gradually bias" an element. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Kayahara also fails to teach or suggest "an absorbing member . . . configured to absorb shock to said driving roller," as recited in Claims 1 and 21.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1 and 21, and claims depending therefrom, are allowable.

Further, new Claims 31 and 32 are added to recite additional features of an absorbing member, which may include a flywheel or a viscous damper, for example as shown in Applicants' non-limiting embodiments of Figures 6A and 6B. Thus, in addition to the reasons described above, Claims 31 and 32 are believed to patentably define over Kayahara for lack of disclosing an absorbing member that includes a flywheel or a viscous damper.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1 and 21, and claims depending therefrom, are allowable.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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